

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2023**

Present: Councillor Mpofu-Coles (Chair);
Councillors Gavin (Vice-Chair), Ballsdon, Cresswell, Davies,
Edwards, Gittings, Hoskin, Keane, McEwan, McGoldrick, O'Connell,
Tarat and Woodward

Apologies: Councillors Robinson

(Councillor Ballsdon was unable to attend in person, so attended and contributed remotely via Microsoft Teams, but did not vote on any of the items, in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972)

8. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that engagement work was being undertaken by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board (ICB) to re-procure its Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) contract. The ICB was currently undertaking a six-week programme of engagement talking to current service users and their families/carers to learn more about how to improve their experience with transport services in BOB, this had been launched in September and had closed on 27 October 2023. Further information was available on the BOB ICB online engagement website as follows: <https://yourvoicebob-icb.uk.engagementhq.com/non-emergency-patient-transport-services-in-bob>

The Chair noted that it was Black History Month and saluted all black women in the Borough and the Council.

9. READING YOUTH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

The Committee received a report providing an overview on how the Youth Council was operated and the various roles and responsibilities of different positions within the Youth Council. A copy of the refreshed Reading Youth Council Constitution was appended to the report. The reviewed constitution clarified the roles, responsibilities, and associated procedures of Reading Youth Council.

The report explained that it had been a successful year for the Reading Youth Council. Following the pandemic young people had been able to engage more actively with the Youth Council, and its members had engaged more actively and directly in their roles.

Members of the Youth Council were present at the meeting and the Chair, Deputy Chair and Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament for Reading addressed the Committee. They provided a summary of achievements for the past year and future work to be carried out. The past achievements included:

- Attending the British Youth Council's annual meeting at the House of Commons

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- Attending and supporting the Youth Climate Festival
- Collaboration with Reading Borough Council on apprenticeships, work experience and mentoring programs
- Involved in the selection of the Reading Borough Council Chief Executive
- Outreach work with schools
- Organisation of the Reading Youth Council Conference for 2023
- Attending the Reading Young People's Hub
- Work with the Reading Düsseldorf Association
- Hosting self-defence classes with Youth Council Members

The Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament for Reading explained that the Youth Council worked cohesively as a team and debated, discussed, and created actions to tackle issues effecting the youth of Reading. Campaigns being undertaken were the environment campaign which included work with Cubs and Beavers to educate them about the environment. A jobs, money, home, and opportunities campaign would include a careers fair for young people, and a social media campaign to raise awareness and profile of the Youth Council.

The Deputy Chair of the Youth Council provided information on a new outreach programme to schools. A school ambassador programme was being undertaken to work with students at schools to help promote the Youth Council initiatives in schools. Also, regular outreach events were taking place with schools and the wider community where the Youth Council had little or no presence. The Youth Council were also using gap analysis to identify schools with no youth council presence to help create a more influential group in Reading.

The Committee were informed that all 23 members of the Youth Council had been elected to their positions and their main role was to take part in planning and delivering services to young people as stated in their Constitution.

The Committee thanked the Youth Council members for their presentation.

Resolved -

- (1) That the work of the Reading Youth Council in 2022/23 be noted;**
- (2) That the Reading Youth Council priorities for 2023/24 be endorsed;**
- (3) That the revised Youth Council Constitution be agreed.**

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cresswell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 on the basis that he worked in alternative provision in education.

11. MINUTES

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The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

- Health and Wellbeing Board - 14 July 2023.

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

Two questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillor Cresswell.

Question	Subject	Reply
Councillor Cresswell	Education Transport Policy for over 16s	Councillor McEwan
Councillor Cresswell	NHS Dentistry	Councillor McEwan

The full text of the questions and replies were made available on the Reading Borough Council website.

14. DENTISTRY UPDATE

The Committee received a report from Hugh O’Keefe, Senior Programme Manager, Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental, Buckingham, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board on NHS dental services in Reading.

The report explained that on 1 July 2022 the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board had taken on delegated responsibility for Dentistry, alongside Pharmacy and Optometry. Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) had an explicit purpose to improve health outcomes for their whole population and the delegation would allow the ICB to integrate services to enable decisions to be taken as close as possible to their residents. The ICB were working to ensure that residents could experience joined up care, with an increased focus on prevention, addressing inequalities and to achieve better access to dental care and advice.

The following points were noted:

- Dental practices delivered services via cash limited contracts with the NHS and were required to deliver agreed levels of activity each year.
- Dental services faced major challenges since the onset of the pandemic including enhanced infection control procedures that had led to reduced dental capacity.

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- Since July 2022 practices had returned to full capacity however there remained a backlog of care.
- Since July 2022 practices were recovering from the pandemic and access to NHS dentistry in Reading was recovering better than other parts of the southeast.
- Some practices were choosing to reduce their NHS commitment or were leaving the NHS.
- Contract delivery had dropped to 30% during the pandemic; this was usually around 95%.
- Contract delivery was now in recovery and in Reading was at 88%.

Actions were being taken to address the challenges, these included arrangements for practices to provide Additional Access sessions for patients who struggled to access care and needed urgent treatment. However, the take up for this scheme had been low with one practice in Reading and one in Buckinghamshire currently involved. Also, a flexible commissioning scheme would support patients to access the system, such as, patients who had not attended a dentist for more than two years, patients relocating, Looked After Children, Asylum seekers and refugees, Families of Armed Forces personnel, and other groups identified by the dental practice. The pilot scheme was being undertaken from 1 June 2023 to 31 March 2024 and 30 practices in the BOB area were taking part.

There was also a significant backlog of patients that were awaiting treatment in a clinic and hospital for treatment under general anaesthetic. To help the service Restoration and Re-set monies had been invested with Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to provide significant improvements in waiting times.

The Committee thanked Hugh for the information and requested that a further update be provided to the Committee in six months times.

Resolved - That a further presentation/report be provided to the Committee in six months.

15. SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation from Martin White, Consultant in Public Health, Reading Borough Council; Rachel Smart, Lead Nurse, Florey Clinic, Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust; Alan Tang, Consultant in Sexual Health and HIV, Florey Clinic, Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust on the integrated sexual health service in Reading.

The presentation included the following points:

- A report from the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in June 2023 had said that overall infections rates were lower in the Southeast, however, some areas such as Reading were reporting rates above the national average.
- An overview of the commissioning arrangements for the integrated sexual health service in Reading which included the local authority, Integrated Care Boards and NHS England.
- The local integrated sexual health service was provided by the Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust (RBFT) following an award of contract in 2020 and would

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run for 10 years. This was joint funded by the three local authorities of Berkshire West.

- The contract value was £2.56m with Reading Borough Council contribution of £1.4m.
- The service included screening and STI testing and diagnosis of HIV, and additional services including sexual health advice and contraceptive services.
- Pre-pandemic testing rates for STIs in Reading had been significantly above Regional and National averages. Following the pandemic testing rates in Reading had not reduced to the same degree as the England rate.
- New STI diagnoses had dropped dramatically with the onset of COVID 19 and had continued to decrease in 2021 and 2022.
- There had been a decrease in diagnosis rates in Reading accompanied by a decrease in percent positivity. The opposite pattern was seen in the Southeast and England.
- Due to good access to remote and face to face testing during various lockdowns the rebound in STI service provision between 2021 and 2022 seen nationally was not reflected in the GUM and Contraception attendances at the Florey Clinic. However there had been an increase in more complex patient cases with more social or sexual health care needs during this period.
- The service met regularly with the Reading commissioning team and West Berkshire and Wokingham to consider the current key performance indicators. The KPIs had been reviewed over the year.
- Significant work had been undertaken to improve the uptake of chlamydia testing for 15-24-year-olds. This had included an improved outreach service, improving social media campaigns, attending University and colleges, and enabling under 18s to access the service.
- Following service user feedback other improvements had included changes to the opening hours at the clinic with late and early start times, adoption of a walk-in and appointment services, and improving and developing online services.
- The Florey Clinic had established additional funding for groups of service users such as refugee and asylum seekers and the LGBTQA+ community.
- Improvements were being undertaken to data and joint working on KPIs with commissioning teams.
- Additional work of the service had included promotion of other services for high risk STIs by working with universities, colleges, charities, and PRIDE, improvements in outreach work, and new projects providing education sessions and STI testing.
- Other work was undertaken with social care and police with staff members attending child exploitation meetings. Also, dealing with mental health and domestic violence concerns, as the service actively asked about domestic violence and this was often disclosed during private meetings with patients.
- The team had also continued to work with the Royal Berkshire Hospital to improve opportunistic testing for sexually transmitted infections and education on testing.
- Reading had seen an increase in overall positive STI diagnoses but this was less than seen nationally. However, STI rates would be monitored and reviewed to consider any continued rise.
- Work of the service would continue to be supported via the wider safe sex educational campaigns and prevention activity commissioned by the local public health teams.

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- Work would also continue with the service provider to assess and ensure the longer-term sustainability of the service in the face of increasing activity and cost pressures.

The Committee thanked Martin, Rachel and Alan for the information and requested that a future report be provided on the work with young people and the sexual health service.

Resolved - That a further report/presentation be provided to the Committee in 12 months and for it to include the work being carried out with young people.

16. YOUTH JUSTICE ANNUAL PLAN

The Committee received a report on the Youth Justice Plan 2023-24. The report explained that the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and a condition of the Youth Justice Board Grant, had placed a duty on the Local Authority to produce an annual Plan. The Plan had been produced and signed off by the Youth Justice Partnership through the Youth Justice Management Board, which was independently chaired. The plan reported the performance of Youth Justice Service (previously the Youth Offending Service) for 2022/23 against the national and statistical family comparators in the period.

The Youth Justice Plan also highlighted achievements and work with parents and children within the service. It also outlined the Youth Justice Service implementation of the Child First approach understood as the framework for those working with young people in the criminal justice service.

A peer review had been requested by the Youth Justice Board, had taken place in November 2022 and recommendations were also incorporated into the plan. The plan had also incorporated information on the youth justice cohort for 2021-23.

The annual report identified the following areas as priorities for 2023-24:

- Reducing first time entrants into the criminal justice system
- Addressing disproportionality within the justice system
- Reducing the impact of serious violence
- The increased participation and engagement of children, young people and their families in the service.

It was reported that the Youth Justice Management Board had oversight of the plan and performance against the targets, and these were reported through the mechanisms of the management board structure.

During the discussion it was noted that the Youth Justice Management Board recognised work needed to be undertaken regarding the disproportionality in the numbers of black children that were open to the Youth Justice Service and were stopped/searched. It was also noted that there were dedicated roles within the Youth Justice Service to support restorative justice. Work was also being developed through the Turnaround programme within the service to ensure young people were offered support and interventions.

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Resolved - That the content of the Youth Justice Plan be noted.

17. EXCLUSIONS UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an update on actions being taken to prevent and reduce exclusions and suspensions and an overview of suspensions and permanent exclusions.

The report provided information on the learning of local and national research into steps to reduce exclusions and increase support for children and young people in schools. This included the 'HearME' project a research project led by young people on their experiences of permanent exclusion in Reading. The final report had been published in 2023 with a response and recommendations document co-authored and shared with schools and stakeholders that had focused on young people's voices. Also, all recommendations made in the government commissioned Timpson Review of School Exclusions that had been published in 2019, had informed the action plan to ensure that schools had the best conditions for children to thrive and progress. Termly strategies had been developed with the Education Leadership Team and the Director of Education to ensure a focused response to the increase in suspension and permanent exclusions. Also, the impact of the child voice related to exclusions were regularly reviewed through monthly meetings to monitor various areas of the service.

The report provided data on suspension and permanent exclusions since 2018 until 2022 in comparison to the national average and statistical neighbour data. Reading was below the national average and the southeast for suspensions until the spring term 2019-20 and spring terms 2020-21 and had moved back to below the national average from summer 2020-21 onwards. In relation to permanent exclusions Reading schools were down by one in 2022-23 in comparison to the previous academic year but had increased from 8 to 11 for Reading children in out of Borough schools. Information was also included on rescindments and overturned permanent exclusions and it was noted that out of 45 issued, 12 permanent exclusions were rescinded or overturned over the course of the academic year, including 7 for children with identified SEND.

Disproportionality suspension data with regard to ethnicity was also included and it was identified that the global majority were children of black Caribbean, mixed white black Caribbean, mixed black African and pupils of any other black background. Continued action in this area was being undertaken included the Anti Racist Project undertaken by the School Effectiveness Team. Work and information on this data was being shared with the Education Partnership Board to ensure that actions plans were reviewed to ensure focus.

Work was also being undertaken with the Youth Justice Board to enable the link between exclusions and suspensions and the increase in the likelihood of young people entering the criminal justice system. Work continued to ensure strategies were closely linked and services were working together to improve the outcomes for young people.

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The Committee requested that a further report regarding the work being undertaken and data regarding disproportionality relating to ethnicity and suspension and exclusions be submitted to a future meeting.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report and the current work being undertaken to prevent and reduce exclusions and suspensions be noted;**
- (2) That a report with further information on disproportionality regarding ethnicity and data on suspensions and exclusions be submitted to a future meeting.**

18. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of items 19 and 20 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

19. SUFFICIENCY UPDATE IN RELATION TO PLACEMENTS OF CHILDREN IN CARE

The Committee considered a report on the sufficiency of placements for children and young people.

Resolved - That the information and the steps being taken by Brighter Futures for Children Ltd, as outlined in the restricted report, to improve the sufficiency of placements for children and young people be agreed and noted.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 5)

20. RESPONSE TO A LGSCO REPORT RELATING TO A COMPLAINT IN BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN

The Committee received a report providing findings from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Resolved - That the action against the recommendations made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) be noted.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2)

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(The meeting closed at 9.03 pm)